

17/06/2000

Eusoff's term likely to be extended: Dr M

Eirmalasare Bani

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Tun Mohamed Eusoff Chin's term as the Chief Justice of the Federal Court is likely to be extended.

Dr Mahathir however could not determined how long the term will be extended.

"I do not know ... I think it will be extended because we have a need to see that everything is in place before there is any change," he said after launching Motorola's new software centre in Cyberjaya yesterday.

Eusoff will turn 65 on June 20, which is the compulsory retirement age for judges. Such regulation is stipulated under Article 125 of the Federal Constitution, which states that the Chief Justice should hold the post until he reaches 65 years old.

However, the term of the Chief Justice of the Federal Court can be extended for not more than six months from the date of compulsory retirement upon approval by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Eusoff succeeded Tun Hamid Omar as Chief Justice on September 24 1994.

On the proposal by the judiciary that litigants in civil cases be charged fees to speed up hearings and avoid the calling of unnecessary witnesses, Dr Mahathir said the Government would have to study the proposal.

Eusoff was earlier reported as saying that the fees could be waived in cases involving the poor. He said the fee would in principle be similar to that levied by the Bar Council mediation centres which charge RM375 for a half-day and about RM700 for a day's hearing.

On another development, the Prime Minister expressed his regrets over allegations that Malaysia does not treat its foreign workers kindly.

"We give them a place (in the country) but instead we get something bad in return. We are faced with a problem of our people being kidnapped. This is a threat to us. We did not do anything (to them)," he said, when asked whether Malaysia will tighten its security in Sabah against Philippine illegal immigrants.

(END)